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GROVE HALL STUDY

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Preliminary Report prepared for
the Grove Hall Development Council

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Area Activity

The Grove Hall Commercial Area is the major retail area for the Upper Roxbury, western Dorchester area. Significant public investments are underway or programmed for the neighborhoods to the northeast and west of the area. The 33.5 acre Brunswick-King Urban Renewal project will commit \$1.4 million in capital expenditures for parks, playgrounds, street lighting, sidewalks and street improvements. Additional monies will be available for low-interest housing rehabilitation loans.

The Washington Park Urban Renewal Project has invested \$70 million of public money, including capital improvements and public facilities such as schools and the Grove Hall Public Library which is located two blocks from the Grove Hall Commercial Area. Approximately 1,400 housing units have been constructed and 1,100 rehabilitated. In addition, the Franklin Park Zoo scheduled for 1975 construction will invest \$15 million and create a year round facility which will attract an estimated 1.5 million persons per year to the Upper Roxbury Community.

These projects total \$86 million of public confidence in the community and represent a commitment toward stabilization as well as an opportunity for the private market to capitalize on these investments.

PRELIMINARY PLANNING PROGRAM

The planning program for Grove Hall is geared toward supporting substantial private investment with the necessary public improvements, so as to have a maximum positive impact on the area.

The public investment in Grove Hall consists of pedestrian lighting, off-street parking and traffic improvements.

Pedestrian Lighting

New street lighting exists on Blue Hill Avenue north of Warren Street. From Warren Street south street lighting exists but with no set pattern. On the corner of Georgia, Schuyler and Cheney Streets there are pedestrian "globe lights" which have been constructed as part of the Washington Park Urban Renewal Project. Initially, these lights were to have been constructed on Blue Hill Avenue as well, but were not completed due to budgetary constraints. This current planning program for Grove Hall proposes installing 81 pedestrian oriented globe lights on Blue Hill Avenue from Schuyler to Devon Street; on Washington Street from Bilodeau Road to Blue Hill Avenue; and on Warren Street from Sunderland to Blue Hill Avenue.

The purpose of the lighting is twofold; first, it will increase lighting in the square and; second, it will define the Grove Hall Commercial area as a special place through the uniformity of the globe lighting.

Parking

Off street parking is necessary to encourage greater use of the commercial area as well as to satisfy existing demand. Existing spaces are at the Community College (20) and the Masonic Hall (75) but no

spaces exist specifically for the retail area. The Masonic Hall site should be studied more closely to determine greater utilization for public use.

Five other potential sites have been studied.

1-"Infill" Site The property is owned by H.U.D. and has two incompletd D.C.A. structures. The site, which is well located for a parking lot was planned originally as a parking lot under the Washington Park Urban Renewal Plan could accomodate approximately 85 spaces at a cost of some \$105,000. A major deterrent to this site is the fact that the whole Infill controversy is in litigation and it appears that H.U.D. will not be able to dispose of any structures for 2-3 years.

2-Adjacent to the Community College The property is owned by the state. The development of this site would require demolition of an existing vacant "quonset" type building, and would accomodate approximately 85 spaces at a cost of an estimated 100,000. It is well located for a parking lot. A major deterrent is a potential conflict with plans for the Community College.

3-Next to Freedom House - The property, owned by Harry Silva was to be developed as a privately operated off-street parking lot under the Washington Park Plan, but has never been finished. It is not as well located as sites 1 and 2. It's final development would cost approximately \$55,000 and could accomodate an estimated 50 cars.

4-Stanwood Street - This site was indicated as a parking lot on Housing Innovations planning study of the Model Cities Area. It is owned by a number of individuals and includes 3 occupied residences. It could accomodate 110 cars at an estimated cost of \$180,000-\$200,000. It is not very well situated for off street parking and would require relocation of families in existing structures.

5-5A Sunderland Street/Blue Hill - Site 5 located on Blue Hill

Avenue would require the demolition of 2 business structures. Within the two structures there are two occupied, one of which is partially used for business. It would provide for some 25 spaces at an estimated cost of \$52,000.

5A would combine 5 with land on Sunderland Street. It would require the demolition of residential structure and would provide a total of 55 spaces @ \$90,000. The site is well located for off street parking but would have to be combined with another lot to serve southern Grove Hall.

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Spaces</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1-	85	\$105,000
2-	85	\$100,000
3-	50	55,000
4-	110	180,000
5-	25	52,000
5a	55	90,000

Traffic

Blue Hill Avenue is a principal arterial street-that serves the area. Other arterial streets are Washington Street, Geneva Avenue, and Warren Street. A direct route exists to the Southeast Expressway via Blue Hill Avenue and Hampdan Street to the Massachusetts Avenue ramp. A second arterial through route is formed by the combination of Washington Street to the south and Warren Street to the north. This route serves traffic with origins in Dorchester and destinations in Roxbury, Fenway and Back Bay. Warren Street also serves shorter trips with orgins and destinations in the Dudley Station area. Geneva Avenue serves trips from Fields Corner; Washington Street connects trips from Codman Square.

MBTA serves the Grove Hall area with several bus lines with origins at Dudley Station and destinations at the Fields Corner and Ashmont Stations.

Nine years have elapsed since the last traffic count was taken. At that time the level of activity had diminished. However, the opening of the Community College and the addition of new business activity has substantially increased the volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Existing traffic control is provided by traffic signals at the intersection of Warren Street and Blue Hill Avenue and with the location of STOP signs at Geneva Avenue and Warren Street. There is a lack of adequate control of vehicular turning movements at the intersection of Washington Street and Blue Hill Avenue creating hazardous and congested conditions. A lack of control of turning movements at the intersection of Geneva Avenue causes confusion due to a complex weaving section of roadway between Warren Street and Washington Street, the large number of uncontrolled pedestrian movements, uncontrolled parking and U Turns during peak hours. A 1973 accident survey shows a total of 73 accidents in the area.

Traffic Improvements for considerations are:

1. Re-set the island at the intersection of Warren Street and Blue Hill Avenue preventing left turns on-to Blue Hill Avenue. 1965 traffic count indicates that a very small percentage of vehicles use this turn.
2. Complete median strip from Georgia Street to Geneva Avenue extending median strip approximately 120' ± thus preventing left turns on Geneva Avenue.

3. Channelization, islands and traffic signals at intersection of Blue Hill Avenue and Washington Street.
4. Pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections.

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